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ÆSTHETICAL STUDY OF ART.

(Concluded.)

THE principle we have viewed in detail, we must also here note in its widest application. Art, under all its forms, is in a philosophic view only the development of an *idea*, in which each individual artist has his share, and whose vocation it is to aid in fulfilling certain of the complementary conditions necessary to its existence and progress. But Art, again, is only one of the many ideas which together constitute the development of larger circles of truth; religion, philosophy, all physical as well as mental sciences, have similar offices and are all referable to an ultimate point of union. The value of all partial truths depends on their relation to larger truths; and it is perfectly to discover and to give correct expression to these very relations, these connecting links, which forms a still deeper mystery of art. When we say, for instance, that the truth of design and that of coloring are separate and combined, we imply the profound secret of these *relations*, which stands upon this principle, that every truth in its combination with other and correlative truths must (to perfect its conditions) be founded upon the self-same principles, modified in expression according to the special nature of each, but modified exactly so as to complete, each according to its separate powers, the conditions of the higher and general truth of which they all form portions. Thus, not only are the unities of design and coloring and composition to be studied separately and together; but their mutual relations, what each one contributes and demands, in the education of that whole of which they are the parts, is a necessary and most difficult study. "Sicut ille deficeret ab artis perfectione qui finalem formam tantum intenderet, moda vero per quæ ad formam pertingeret, non curaret—sic natura, si solam formam universalem divinæ similitudinis in universo intenderet, media autem negligeret. Sed natura in nulla perfectione deficit, cum sit opus divinæ intelligentiæ: ergo media omnia intendit, per quæ ad ultimum suæ intentionis devenitur."*

We have spoken of science as opposed to poetry with no invidious partiality or preference: in exalting the character of the latter, it has not been from any desire to lower the real value and importance of the former; on the contrary, we hold that any pursuit of truth in its manifold branches which arrogates to itself an exclusive or partial importance, and regards with jealousy and disdain opposite or different ones, manifests in this a departure, in that proportion, from the just estimate of

the end, the reality and the value of truth itself—the truth—to which all these paths lead. We reproach not the pursuit of natural science, but we lament to see it associated often with an unworthy disdain of the truth under other aspects: for all science is beautiful and true in its results, and physical science unfolds the knowledge of the divine laws in the operations of nature. The nearest approach to truth is attained by concentration of thought upon single pursuits; but to attach to any of these an exclusive value contradicts the very essence of truth, which in its ultimate aims is all-comprehensive. The mathematician may delight in the geometrical staircase in St. Paul's, but is he therefore to ridicule another, who, in admiring the edifice, seeks the law of God which creates that admiration within him?

We revert to the subject which has led to these remarks—the acquirement of a correct knowledge of criticism. But in speaking of feeling as the measure of taste, it must be considered under its most perfect conditions. It is, therefore, not the particular feelings of the individual which are the correct guide of judgment, but the power which lies in feeling, properly developed and trained: the amateur requires this knowledge to judge of results—the artist, to employ the true means of producing them. All feeling is criticism in degree, and the education of the feelings leads to the knowledge of the right standing-point to occupy. The first step is to temper the feelings with judgment, to awaken them to a conviction that discriminating knowledge is necessary to their own proper satisfaction and enjoyment. This done, much has been accomplished; the direction is given, the student is planted on the right road, and he feels the necessity of pursuing it; he will seek aids to the formation of his own judgment, no longer prying into books for criticism to dictate, but for knowledge to direct; he looks at the opinions of others, not to adopt, but to appreciate them—to enable him to weigh and establish his own. Happy for art if criticism could be universally grounded upon knowledge, and the worth of opinion be understood and measured by conviction: we should hear no more of patronage or fashion; our exhibitions would cease to be bazaars for the sale of gaudy wares, and artists would paint, not up to "Academy tone," but to the pitch of truth.

It will be seen that our remarks deal more with the preparation for study than the details of its application; what we urge is, to teach, first, the value of discrimination, the nature of the materials, to give to history a just value, to separate the results of art from the means; to teach the artist to select and to generalize, to know the difference between technical and poetical knowledge

* Dante, Monarchia, lib. ii.

and feeling, and the connoisseur to mark intention as the standard of criticism. To have a correct knowledge of the artist's intention—to seize and apply this as the criterion of his execution—to distinguish the value of this from the merit of the intention itself, apart from its treatment—to estimate everything, in short, by its own proper measure, referring at the same time everything to its relation to the whole—this is the result of æsthetic training, the proper use of the intellect and the proper understanding of feeling.

Nor perhaps is it inopportune at the present time to urge the necessity of discriminating criticism, when there are such strong tendencies to degrade the study of Art into the plaything of a drawing-room. There is a fashion abroad to profess an unlimited enthusiasm for certain schools and painters; at one time the Dutch artists are in vogue—on a sudden Dutch painters are found to be “vulgar fellows,” and Raphael becomes the *Magnus Apollo*! soon again we discover that all the beauty in Raphael's style existed long before in the old German school; our glasses are instantly narrowed to another focus, and Van Eyck and Hemmlynck become the miracles of art: we take credit to ourselves for acute penetration in tracing the germ of Raphael's spirit in the earlier masters, and, instead of attaching to this extremely interesting investigation its real value, our ill-directed and ill-formed criticism is unavoidably hurried into the fatal error of mistaking the value of history for the value of art. Such is the folly which opinion, founded on the fancy of a day and the caprice of the *mode*, betrays; extravagance takes the place of true feeling, and Art is the puppet of fashion; but it is, in sober truth, humiliating to reflect that this is the channel in which criticism flows, and that art is taught in such a school of ignorance, and expounded by quack critics of the *salons*.*

— Du übst die Hand,

Du übst den Blick, nün üß' auch den Verstand.

Dem glücklichsten Genie wird's kaum einmal gelingen,

Sich durch Natur und durch Instinct allein

Zum Ungetheinen aufzuschwingen.

Die Kunst bleibt Kunst! Wer sie nicht durchgedacht;

Der darf sich keinen Künstler nennen;

Hier hilft das Tappen nichts; eh' man was Gutes macht,

Muss man es erst recht sicher kennen.

Die Kunst hat nie ein Mensch allein besessen.

There is in this country an ignorant prejudice against what is opprobriously termed German mysticism, æsthetics, *et id genus omne*. Unhappily we have a national antipathy to that propensity of our German neighbors to attach more value to ideas than to forms of expression. The appeal to common sense is rung into

our ears, as if it were a thing opposed to all investigations which concern truth in its highest forms, foreign to all attempts to treat of things which in their nature transcend the five senses of the body. The objections of the materialist we can understand; but if it be admitted that there is within man a principle of loftier growth, of unlimited expansion and unlimited aspiration after things above sense and matter—a strength in spirit superior to the infirmities of body; if man has the power and the privilege of dealing in thought with things of heaven as well as of manufacturing shop commodities—if he is a spirit as well as a brute—if thought and feeling stand in the middle range between heaven and earth, and man is admitted by the soul's privilege to participate, through interpreters of God's appointment, in the divine essence (through an infinitely distant participation indeed, nevertheless not less than this, for that the consciousness of the fact is the evidence and instance of the fact)—then must every attempt to exercise, to raise and to direct our feelings be a good and a holy task. “Amongst men,” says Novalis, “must God be sought; in human events, in man's thoughts and man's feelings, the spirit of heaven reveals itself most clearly; nothing is more indispensable to true religiousness than a link which connects us with divinity.” Our men of science are not reproached for boldness in speculation; temerity in them is admired and applauded. But when the science of feeling presents itself as a subject for analysis and study—that science which in its object and pursuit transcends the limits of sense—when, in the attempt to sound the depths and fix the principles of that nicest and most delicate sense, that subtle consciousness of truth, which exceeds reason, because reason cannot prescribe its action or set limits to the infinite, which the hand of God alone regulates and his eye alone sees—then a host of superficial critics, of timid bigots and bold skeptics, rise up to clamor down the attempt as an implety and folly. Those very men who, in the earnestness of inquiry, deeming truth to be of higher import than verbal definitions, have looked *into* the matter with an intent to profit, not *at* it for the purpose of ridicule—to whom language is but the dress of ideas, and who shape the garment to the body, and not the body to the garment—are the last to attach importance to their own phraseology; they readily admit the insufficiency of many of their expressions, and retain them for the same reason only that they invented them, because dictionaries afford no other words to express what they *want* to express. We admire the consistency of our Johnsonian critics, who readily concede an unlimited patent for jargon to science, and reserve all the shafts of their wit and ridicule for the man of feeling, who, venturing beyond its sphere, seeks, not to give names to things, but realization to ideas.

This prejudice is, we hope, wearing away, and the

* The same remarks are fully as applicable to music, on which divine art still less knowledge is generally possessed, and a still greater critical taste is generally affected. The impudence of such affectation is only equalled by its amusing absurdity.

study of æsthetical science is beginning to feel its way among us. The publication of such a work as this of Kugler's in England, which, though small in compass and not treating of æsthetics directly, contains much of its spirit as applied to painting, is a symptom that, with a feeling for Art, a desire for restoring it to its proper position is gaining ground. The appearance of the volume is opportune, and it may tend to foster what begins in the form of a taste into something more permanently valuable. Mr. Kugler places the study of art before English readers in an instructive manner, teaching the genuine value of its history, and discriminating between this and the scientific pursuit of it; he states his object to be to furnish the student with an "intelligible guide to a general knowledge of the history and progress of painting, pointing out to the unlearned the leading styles of art, and serving as an introduction to the researches of our most recent writers." The value of the work is not a whit lessened by its being, as the author with more modesty than correctness states, a compilation; he adds that, "in treating his materials, he has endeavored to follow the method of the most recent critics, particularly that which, in the researches of Von Rumohr, first established its conclusions on the foundation of genuine history." We shall confine our remaining observations to the subject treated in the introductory portion of the work.

Tracing in the history of Art the development of truth under the character of form, all facts assume their proper places and their due importance. The events and character of different periods, the political, social and religious temper of succeeding ages, interest, as they illustrate the advance of this grand idea, and constitute the accessory conditions to its development; they exhibit the influences of individuals upon society, and of circumstances upon individuals, all in relation to Art; the causes which have hastened or retarded the unfolding of mind, and directed the channels of thought, are registered in the productions of the artist, which are the parts he has acted in the world, the inheritance he bequeaths to posterity; in these we have the fragments of which history is composed. "If the history of painting," says Mr. Rio, "were apart from, and (so to speak) placed beyond the general movement of the human faculties among a people, the fixed religious attachment to Christian traditions among the artists would constitute only an isolated and almost imperceptible fact in the annals of the republic of Venice. But the revolutions which the fine arts undergo being the surest indication of those which are at the same time in operation on the imagination of a people, the study of these may lead to the most instructive results, and thus be susceptible of the highest interest, even in a philosophic point of view. The works of painters, as those of poets, when they are acknowledged and encouraged by their fellow-citizens, are the faithful mirror in which are suc-

cessively reflected all the changes that pass over the national genius," * Mr. Eastlake has appended the following note to Kugler's review of early Christian art;

In perusing the foregoing pages, in which the styles of imitation during centuries more or less barbarous have been briefly but correctly described, some readers may have been reminded of Walpole's observations on the comparative claims of nations to "antiquity of ignorance." Could some of the specimens which have been referred to be presented to view, it might at first be matter of surprise that they should be deemed worthy of a critical examination. The historian, however, regards the productions of every age with interest, because he connects them with the habits, the manners and the religion of the people. Thus the absolute merit or demerit of works of art is not, in the historian's eyes, the sole ground of interest; and a gallery of painting should, if possible, contain specimens of every remarkable period of art. In our own country, even the works of the Italians before Raphael have been hitherto scarcely considered worthy of attention; but this indifference to the early progress of imitation, and to the historical associations connected with it, is happily fast disappearing.

In ancient Greece, Art constituted in a manner the religion of the people; the imaginative character of their mythology found in it its ideal expression; *form* was the language of a religion, whose mysteries sprung from the imagination and the feelings. "Strange," says Novalis, "that the Greek mythology was so independent of religion; it seems that the development of art in Greece preceded religion, and that an infinitely elevated idealism of religion was instinctive with the Greeks. Religion was essentially an object of human art; art appeared divine, or religion artlike (*künstlich*) and human; the feeling of art was the feeling that engendered religion—the divine revealed itself through art."

Art died in Greece, and every trace of the influences under which it had risen vanished; a complete change had to pass over the human mind before it should reappear, and this great moral revolution gave to it a new character and new offices. It was no longer to stand for a nation's religion, but was admitted, at first with jealous timidity and opposition, to serve subordinately in the temple, to minister to the faith out of which it sprung; the spirit of the age was reflected in it as in a mirror. The chain of association with all previous habits of thought and feelings and faith had to be entirely broken, the religious sentiment to be obliterated, the materials of art to be fused in a new mold. It was no longer the object of a worship, but the servant of another and higher spiritual worship; no longer to be pursued as an end, but cultivated as a means. The progress and necessity of this revolution corresponded with the character of the two religions: they constituted the conditions of the change. In this intimate connection is the history of Art, at the epoch of its revival,

* Rio, de la Poésie Chrétienne, *Formes de l'Art*, p. 562.

with the history of Christian faith : the fervor of feeling kindled by the influences of the new religion was naturally susceptible (though slow to acknowledge it) of a corresponding æsthetic fervor for art ; and the very zeal which at first waged war against it with an iconoclastic spirit, from the impression that it was essentially heathen and idolatrous, took the opposite turn as soon as the adaptability of its powers to the Christian faith was recognized and felt.

"But there lives," says Kugler, "in art a higher element. So long as it has not degenerated into an empty phantom, it sustains and preserves the general sentiment of moral purity, and finds its perfection, in an especial sense, in the mysterious relation of Christianity to the present world. Hence the opposition alluded to could not long continue, and must have ceased even of itself, when in the beginning of the fourth century Christianity was publicly recognized under Constantine, and its victory over Heathenism was no longer doubtful. The great number of works of art which appeared in the first centuries after this revolution, although they are certainly more remarkable for fullness of meaning than technical completeness, are a clear proof that the creative impulse had hitherto been restrained by external circumstances alone."

The interest springing from this view of its history is mainly independent of art viewed as a science, and the spirit that informed was necessarily antecedent to the form produced. Technical art grew up with more or less rapidity in after times, and attained its maturity and full stature only three centuries after its birth. The development of a spiritual sense in the artists of the Umbrian school assumes the character of faith under the form of art, rather than that of art under the influence of faith. Mr. Rio thus speaks of this "mystic school of painting," as he terms it :

Here is the limit to the competence of those who are commonly termed *connoisseurs* ; the peculiar organ which is exercised in the appreciation of the kind of productions of which we shall now speak, is from this point no longer that which judges the ordinary works of art. Mysticism is to painting what ecstasy is to psychology ; and this sufficiently explains how delicate are the materials which enter into this portion of our history. It is not sufficient to assign the origin and to follow the development of certain traditions which stamp a common character, almost always easy of recognition, upon works issuing from the same school : we must also, with a deep sympathy, connect our investigation with certain religious habits of thought, which more particularly pre-occupied the artist at his easel or the monk in his cell, and combine the effect of this enthusiasm with the corresponding dispositions among their contemporaries. This condition it is extremely difficult for us to fulfill : we have not breathed the atmosphere of Christian poetry in the midst of which those generations lived. It is in the lives of the saints, much more than in those of the painters, that we must seek the proof of those interesting relations between religion and art." *

These remarks are perfectly just, and we object only

* Rio, de la Poésie Chrétienne, Forme de l'Art, p. 161.

to their restricted application. We enter fully into these catholic views of catholic art, and agree with Mr. Rio that the highest beauty of the painters of the mystic school can only be felt by those who enter into the spirit which occupied them ; it is poetry in its highest religious character—it is religion under the aspect of devout and absorbing contemplation—it is art under one (an important, but still a single one) of its aspects. St. Augustine or Aquinas was more the head of this school than any painter ; and its influences are to be traced to the cell of the monk, where art was only admitted as the ray of light which fell upon the kneeling penitent. Mr. Kugler gives the following introduction to his account of this school :

It was quite natural that the efforts at direct imitation which characterized so many important schools, and which aimed at mere truth and beauty of external form, rather than at any spiritual depth of meaning, should call forth a decided manifestation of an opposite kind. This contrariety already existed in Florentine art, in the first half of the fifteenth century, when Fra Giovanni da Fiesole appeared as a marked exception to the general tendency of the Florentine artists. It took place to a still greater extent in the latter part of this century in the schools of Umbria. The external habits and circumstances of life in this retired valley of the upper Tiber tended to give a spiritual direction to art. This region had distinguished itself in the middle ages above all Italy, as the peculiar seat of religious enthusiasm. Here were found the most miraculous pictures ; here were born and nurtured enthusiasts like St. Francis ; and Assisi, with its Basilica, founded by this saint, naturally calculated as it was to foster such feelings, was the centre round which the other townships ranged themselves as tributaries. Art followed the current of life here, as it did in the commercial cities of Florence and Venice, as it did in Padua, where the study of classic lore predominated. Purity of soul, fervent unearthly longings, and an abandonment of the whole being to a pleasing-sad, enthusiastic tenderness—these are the prevailing characteristics of the school to which we now turn our attention.

As this spirit of faith declined, and the religious tendencies lapsed into a revival of the Greek philosophy, we witness a corresponding change in the character of painting ; and it was under the influence of this change that art, in its independent character *as art*, rose to its highest elevation. We cannot ascribe this wholly to the direct influences of a heathen spirit of the times, but in part to the indirect and powerful influence of transition. It is important to distinguish these views, because the restriction of art to the offices which Mr. Rio would assign to it, excludes the wider, and, as we conceive, the higher estimate of its powers and exercise : but, although he contracts the circle of its exercise, he does not undervalue the means which Art employs : he thus notices the development of the science of coloring in the Venetian school :

After having followed, through all its ramifications, the religious school [in Venice] of which Giovanni Bellini was the

head, and noticed their most remarkable productions in order of time and place, we stop at the limit of an epoch marked by entirely other characteristics, and during which painting, shaking off the constraint of ancient traditions, yielded to the impulse which was given to it by Giorgione, Titian, and especially by Aretino. . . . This kind of dualism in the Venetian school is the more remarkable, as the good and evil principles were a long while opposed to one another; the followers of G. Bellini having continued to represent and promulgate his doctrines up to the middle of the sixteenth century—that is to say, nearly forty years after the death of Giorgione, and more than twenty years after the arrival of Aretino at Venice. If the new masters may boast of having introduced some elements of perfection unknown to their predecessors, it was at least impossible for them to contest with them the glory of having founded, since the fifteenth century, the preëminence of the Venetian school over all others for coloring—a merit which is much less superficial, and even much less material, than is generally supposed, and which is connected with psychological conditions of a very elevated order.

The dominion of painting appears to have been divided in Italy into three principal schools. The Florentine school excelled in the science of design, and, generally, in the representation of contour and form: it was affected more than any other with the beauty of the antique, and sculpture and engraving were cultivated in Florence with a sort of instinctive zeal. The Umbrian school excelled in the expression of pious emotion and the pure affections of the soul, and abounded in contemplative and mystic painters; but it disdained all the treasures of classic antiquity, and gave birth to no sculptor or engraver of celebrity. Lastly, the Venetian school excelled in coloring; and, ever animated with the desire, or rather the passion, of attaining perfection in this branch of art, as if from the first it had the consciousness of its special vocation, it did not stop to imitate the Grecian and Roman models of antiquity, and manifested an almost invincible repugnance to the combination of lines and forms, when unassisted by the charms of coloring.*

This threefold direction of the artistic spirit in Italy is peculiarly interesting, when we reflect that these divisions, distinct in character, constitute precisely those elements of Art which are the necessary complements of one another—namely, the spiritual or poetic feeling, the sentiment of design and that of coloring. The cultivation of these in separate schools shows the strength of each tendency to impress and influence the mass; and thus the spirit of a school of artists resembles that of an epoch or people, in which certain strong and singular impressions and tendencies are reflected as in a mirror. The characteristic features of the early and pure Christian art—that earnest, quick, penetrating feeling of devotion, so purely subjective in its character, so full of holy serenity and the firm gentleness of faith—were developed in the Sienese and Umbrian schools. Perugino perhaps carried this spirit to its highest development. In these schools Art, as the expositor of Christian faith, occupied its highest position in a religious view, but unquestionably a much lower one in its technical aspect, than it afterward attained under other influences. It

was the peculiar greatness of Raphael that he united the two, or rather retained (in his early period at least) the pure sentiment of Christian faith, whilst he invested it with the scientific grandeur, truth and power which he derived from the Florentine school. His soul was spiritually cast, but he knew the value and just use of the materialism of his art, of which Michael Angelo was the great master: he knew, moreover, that highest spiritualism, which dominates over the matter of the painter's subject, as well as of his tools—the elements of the poetry of art.

Our history thus presents two distinct phases—the poetic, or spiritual development, and technical science in its largest meaning; as the former declined the latter advanced. Mr. Rio notices this transition:

The second period of the Florentine school will not offer us either the same unity of object or the same purity of elements. Two different tendencies, the antagonism of which will become more and more marked, will dispute the imagination of the artist and the domain of art. We shall have to mark the resurrection of paganism, and, among painters, a commencement of defection not less flagrant than among the sculptors and architects and poets. This germ of decay will unfold itself slowly and almost invisibly, whilst under other aspects, painting will advance rapidly toward its perfection. It is therefore important not to lose sight of this twofold development, which took place simultaneously in an inverse proportion, and which throws more light than any theory on the important problems which we shall have subsequently to resolve.*

Mr. Kugler has divided his history of painting into four "stages of development," followed by its decline; under these leading divisions he introduces the various schools, the principal masters and their followers, giving brief introductory sketches of the origin, and chiefly of the tendencies, of each school, as marking the advance and changes in the art. This he has followed throughout, and proves that he not only well understands the philosophic and æsthetic character of his subject, but how to render it highly interesting as well as instructive. The first book treats of early Christian art, which he introduces with the following admirable remarks:

In the study of history in general, the circumstances which mark the periods of development—the first quickening of the germ, the gradual expansion and formation, the influences that check and disturb advancing growth, and the successful struggles through which they are overcome—have always a peculiar interest, and this is especially the case in the history of Christian art. In it we remark a variety of influences in complex operation, which trace out a peculiar path distinct from the development of art in other times. We do not recognize the first efforts of imitation common to the nations of antiquity, beginning in rude and formless essays, the result of indistinct notions, and advancing step by step toward excellence: on the contrary, we find art in this instance at first shunned and despised, then forced into forms outwardly mature, but whose spirit had already passed away; torpid through long cen-

* Rio, de la Poésie Chrétienne, *Forme de l'Art*, p. 521.

* Rio, de la Poésie Chrétienne, *Forme de l'Art*, p. 90.

turies of revolutions, ferments and popular migrations; but at length, like the butterfly, casting off the lifeless, imprisoning shell, and unfolding its light wings for a free and upward flight. Yet between this period and the complete attainment of its aim, we find art in a variety of differently modified stages of development, often dependent on external accidents, often loitering in its progress, as if pausing to rest.

The first point of interest for us is the relation which subsisted between the earliest Christian art and that of heathen antiquity. The flourishing period of Grecian art was already past before the establishment of Christianity; to create, with the freedom of genius, in the spirit of those great artists who had made the undying reputation of Athens, was not the privilege of the Roman, nor of the Romanized Greek; but the high ideal type, the proportion and relation of forms, the dignified and the noble in attitude and gesture—all this was imitated—again and again imitated—on the whole not without success. By this means the frivolous luxury of the Romans had been stamped with a character of grandeur and elevation, the source of which must undoubtedly be sought in the true moral essence of Grecian art.

Thus the Christians found a highly finished form of imitation, and a very experienced technical skill, of which they might have availed themselves for creations of their own. But in the peculiar and hostile position which they were forced to assume against the heathen religion and its followers, they at first allowed no representation whatever of holy subjects; and when, in later times, their scruples had ceased, heathen art was already drawing near to extinction. The Christians therefore first practised the art in the degenerate manner of the latest Roman period; with that manner they still imbibed the last ray of ancient grandeur; at the same time they applied what they adopted, even from the beginning, in a peculiar manner.

The cause of this determined opposition to the exercise of imitative art lay not so much in a blind attachment to the Mosaic law, as in the circumstance that art generally was considered as the servant, nay, even as the pillar of idolatry; it became known, as we have seen, only in the degraded condition into which it had sunk, by ministering to a weak and criminal sensuality. It appeared the encourager alike of heathenism and moral depravity. Artists who wrought images of the gods were regarded as messengers and servants of Satan; baptism was denied them by the church, so long as they adhered to their profession, and excommunication was pronounced against the neophyte who followed the prohibited occupation.

From the opposition to direct representations of sacred subjects arose the use of symbolical disguises, which characterize the first ages of Christian art: Mr. Kugler thus concludes his account of these:

In reviewing the circumstances that have been adduced, we recognize in these peculiar representations a new and vital principle displaying itself very strikingly in the forms of the declining Pagan world; we recognize, in short, the principle of Christian art, which conveys with the objects it represents a still deeper meaning, thus exciting the mind of the beholder to a corresponding activity of thought. It is true, in the above-mentioned efforts this principle is seen only in its early imperfect form; the connection between the representation and its meaning is for the most part as yet external, and only to be understood by the assistance of the key furnished by different passages of Scripture. Yet even in these attempts we see an

opening to the path which was to lead in future times to such great results.

The first stage of the development of painting commences with the masters of the thirteenth century, amongst whom Cimabue occupies the highest rank. This period is important as being one of transition: the stiff, inanimate forms of the Byzantine school were beginning to yield to a study of nature in connection with that of the antique; the former imparting life and truth to the figures, the latter introducing a purity of form. The following introduction to the second stage of development is a specimen of the philosophical manner in which our author reviews the history of art, and contains excellent remarks:

In the revival of art, the chief aim of the artist was the intelligible expression of the *theme* he had to treat; to seize this characteristically, to represent it faithfully, to give it animation, was his highest ambition. To this end his creative power was as yet almost exclusively devoted; and if at times the mind of the *individual* was in some degree apparent, as in certain impassioned representations that have been described, this may have been rather from external causes of excitement peculiar to the period, than from an inly-felt necessity to express the character and feelings through the medium of the incident represented. It appears at first sight, that such a distinction between the theme itself and the manifestation of the individual mind in treating it, is inadmissible—that the repose of a work of art would be destroyed by such a disunion; and such in fact is the case: but out of this disunion a new and closer alliance was to arise. This separation and union have their foundation in the very essence of Christianity, which recognizes no independent value in the world and its phenomena, but represents the world as alienated from the Divine Spirit—alienated, yet, conscious of its state, ever seeking to return. It was for the artist to express this relation, this tendency to reconciliation, between the earthly, the transitory, and the spiritual and eternal. In the first exercise of art among the Christians, this contrast was already apparent; but the form it then assumed was merely external. In the further development of art, an arbitrary symbolization was no longer sufficient; the representation itself was required to be at once symbol and meaning. Above all it became necessary that the creating artist should appear more definitely in his own individual character. It was from his *consciousness* only that this relation between the earthly form and the unearthly spirit could be made evident; only when the representation was the result of original conception, could the spiritual meaning be freely expressed. Thus the end, in which the perfection of art was to consist, was again thrown far in advance, and only to be attained after many successive eras of development. Thus, too, it was at first necessary that a *subjective* tendency should establish itself exclusively, that the separation above alluded to should be distinctly defined, before the alliance of the opposing principles could be attempted. And, indeed, this new subjective direction was at first so decidedly prevalent, and in some respects so exclusive, that many of the qualities previously acquired were suffered to remain neglected, and the influence would scarcely be exempt from the reproach of having caused some retrogradation, if under the circumstances such a judgment did not appear equally partial. In fact, the mental bias in question stood in the closest relation

to all the tendencies of the period, when the so-named romantic principle had attained its highest development: art and poetry, monastic life and chivalry, the homage to saints and the homage to beauty, all the forms of life, bore the same stamp, and constituted in their harmony a wondrous and peculiar whole.

We shall now consider the next succeeding period of modern art, in which this subjective mode of conception prevails. Tuscany, that tract of Italy to which the greatest names of the preceding period had belonged, still maintains the first place during this new period. Two principal tendencies are to be distinguished in this stage of the progress of art; they are identified with the opposite characteristics, which must always exist in the subjective mode of conception. In the one the intellect predominates, in the other the feelings; the former seeks to embody its conceptions or presentiments of things not finite in visible appearances; the aim of the latter, on the contrary, is to give a higher sanction to the objects of the material world, through the influence of a holier feeling. The first may be compared in some degree to didactic poetry, and displays itself more or less in allegorical representations, sometimes over-refined and insipid, sometimes profound in meaning and imaginative: the latter is completely lyric, and communicates to its productions the predominating expression of a peculiar tone of mind. The first direction was more especially that of the Florentine artists, the second that of the Siennese.

We must here close our notice of Kugler's work; the extracts we have given are sufficient specimens of the earnest and enlightened manner in which the author treats his subject. Our remarks have been directed more to show the utility of such an aid to study, than to criticise the pages of the book; and we willingly leave to others the gratification of discovering verbal inaccuracies or occasional errors, content to speak of it generally in the high terms it merits, both as to its design and execution. There is an honesty and truth in the criticisms, which make us respect the author even where we differ from him; his view of history is correct, and he has treated it with judicious and discriminating care; the language throughout is excellent, not weakened by unmeaning and extravagant epithets, but conveying every idea, the characteristics of painters and the descriptions of works of art, in the clearest, most appropriate and forcible manner. No inconsiderable portion of this praise is due to the lady who undertook the task of translation: it is executed with faithfulness and accuracy, and the nature of the work required this: whilst a correctness, and even elegance of style is preserved, nothing of higher importance is sacrificed to display; knowledge and refinement have gone hand in hand. The value of the work has been greatly increased by the excellent critical and historical remarks which have been added by Mr. Eastlake: it would be difficult to find another editor so well qualified for the task, uniting the knowledge and true feeling of an artist with a great fund of historical information. We take our leave of the book, with safely recommending it as the most valuable introductory work to the historical study of art which we possess.

The references we have occasionally made to Mr. Rio's work, *De la Poésie Chrétienne, sous la Forme de l'Art*, will have shown our estimation of its spirit. Although we take a different standing-point to regard Art, and assign to it a wider field of exercise and larger offices, yet, granting him his position, we cannot speak too highly of the elevated, pure and noble views of religious art which he upholds: our grounds of variance do not exclude a cordial sympathy so far as we do agree.

But before concluding this article, we wish briefly to notice another work, which, although partly differing in purpose from Mr. Kugler's, may well be classed with it, as tending to the same object of education. This is a critical companion to the public galleries by Mrs. Jameson, called, in deference to the fashion of the day, a *Hand-book*—although the head has at least something more to do with such a work than the hands. "When one sees an admirable piece of art," says Richardson, "it is part of the entertainment to know to whom to attribute it, and to know his history." Nor is this idle curiosity, but consistent with a higher though distinct study of the works themselves: such information throws light on the historical value of works of art. But Mrs. Jameson's book is of a higher character than a catalogue raisonné: she has interspersed her accounts of pictures with critical remarks, evincing great discrimination, and extensive knowledge not only of the works themselves, but their estimation by the best writers, whom she has largely cited, to the exclusion at times of criticisms which we should gladly have received from her own pen; she has given us enough to make us wish that she had given us a great deal more. We should gladly have entered more fully into the merits of this valuable book, had we not already exceeded our limits: it would be difficult to increase its utility, to better its plan, or improve its general execution. Mrs. Jameson has bestowed great pains and research in collecting information, and has exercised her usual good judgment in the arrangement of her materials. The catalogue of pictures in the different galleries is preceded by a historical account of each: the introduction to the Royal Galleries is a valuable contribution to our national history of Art; but we shall rather select her remarks on our National Gallery, as affording matter for useful reflection:

The utter want of all arrangement and classification has been publicly and severely noticed; but is not the number and choice of the pictures much too confined at present to admit of that systematic arrangement we admire in the foreign galleries of art? It appears to me that the number of pictures should be at least doubled before any such arrangement could be either improving or satisfactory, though undoubtedly the purposes for which the *National Gallery* has been instituted demand that it should be taken into consideration as soon as possible. In the present state of the gallery, still in its very infancy, any comparison with some of the celebrated foreign galleries would be

invidious and absurd. I will only observe that in the collection at Berlin, which was begun about the same time with our National Gallery, there are now about 900 pictures admirably arranged; in the glorious Pinacothek at Munich there are 1600 pictures, the arrangement of which appears to me perfect. The Florentine Gallery containing about 1500 pictures, that of the Louvre containing about 1350, that of Dresden about 1200, that of the city of Frankfort (of recent date, and owing its existence to an individual) about 340 pictures, all afford facilities in the study of art which we look for in vain, as yet, in our own.

A gallery like this—a national gallery—is not merely for the pleasure and civilization of our people, but also for their instruction in the value and significance of art. How far the history of the progress of painting is connected with the history of manners, morals and government, and, above all, with the history of our religion, might be exemplified visibly by a collection of specimens in painting, from the earliest times of its revival, tracing the pictorial representations of sacred subjects from the ancient Byzantine types of the heads of madonnas and apostles, through the gradual development of taste in design and sensibility to color, aided by the progress in science, which at length burst out in fullest splendor when Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Correggio, Titian, were living at the same time. (What an era of light! it dazzles one's mental vision to think of it.) They effected much, but how much did they owe to their predecessors? As to the effect which would be produced here by the exhibition of an old Greek or Sienese madonna, I can imagine it all; the sneering wonder, the aversion, the contempt; for as yet we are far from that intelligence which would give to such objects their due relative value as historic monuments. But we are making progress: in the fine arts, as in many other things, knowledge comes after love. Let us not despair of possessing at some future period a series of pictures so arranged, with regard to school and chronology, as to lead the inquiring mind to a study of comparative styles in art; to a knowledge of the gradual steps by which it advanced and declined; and thence to a consideration of the causes, lying deep in the history of nations and of our species, which led to both. Meantime the very confined precincts assigned to the National Gallery have excited some well-founded misgivings, and people ask very naturally—"Suppose that another munificent spirit were to rise up among us, emulous of Sir George Beaumont, Mr Carr, or Lord Farnborough, and bequeath or present a gallery of pictures to the nation: where are they to be hung?" There is indeed a room (a sort of cellar) beneath, where the few pictures not exhibited are for the present incarcerated, and which is intended, I believe, to receive those for which there is no room above-stairs; but the arrangement of space and light is as bad as possible. We may for the present comfort ourselves in the reflection that some twenty or thirty pictures which now *adorn* the walls of these rooms, might be turned out without any great loss to the public, or any essential diminution of the value and attraction of our National Gallery. But this comfort can only last a certain time, and then —? I suppose we must have what the Scotch call a *fitting*, and seek house-room elsewhere.

Our readers will have in remembrance the worthy matrons whose arduous and ill-paid duty it was, as ministers of the crown, to hurry crowds of picture-hunters daily through the rooms of our palaces: people came from the uttermost parts of the earth to see the cartoons

of Raphael, unreasonably hoping that for their pains, in toiling through a month's pilgrimage, they might be allowed to remain one half-hour at the shrine. But the ministering angel, who drove them before her like a flock of sheep, was no respecter of persons, and ever and anon jingled her keys, as a polite intimation to the poor hungry and travelled artist "to move on." The picture is reversed, and we honor that spirit which has crept into our legislature, of recognizing the ability as well as the right of the public to study as well as to stare at the treasures of our public galleries. Instead of our being driven starving from the doors, they are now opened freely; we are invited to enter and to remain, the only conditions being the proper use of the privilege—the condition, that no irreverence or injury be done to the great works of art. One consequence of this change has been a change of cicerone through the galleries: the ministerial function of our former guides is ended, and Mrs. Jameson has succeeded to their place; as is often the case, a small change effects an immense difference. We must notice one thing with earnest satisfaction in reference to this subject. The most important consideration is, not so much the immediate benefit brought to the nation by the free opening of our galleries, as what this change indicates in the national mind itself. The government has learnt to recognize the importance of these aids to the people's education; and we already see the fruits of their liberal measures, in the important fact, that a power of seeing *has*, in a large degree (proportioned to the time it has been admitted) led to a power, or what is still better, to a desire, of appreciating. Here lie the proofs, in the appearance of such books as Mrs. Jameson's and Kugler's *Hand-books of Art*—works full of knowledge and right criticism, which are in the hands of thousands, instructing the studious, making studious the idle-minded; making Art, as something new and strange, work in the hearts and minds of those who never before looked beyond the canvas of the picture, nor dreamt of any relation between mind and expression, nor imagined that there existed deep and religious sympathies and understanding between the artist and the spectator, and that the key to those sympathies was the work itself, which, like a mirror placed before two objects, reveals the one to the other, and is the centre of the mutual efforts of their minds.

THE happy paintings even of a dream bring joy, until their rainbow hues melt away. The dreams of the imagination have greatly the advantage over those of sleep; our will gives them birth—we prolong, dissipate, and renew them at pleasure. All who have learned to multiply these happy moments, know, at the same time, how to enjoy these agreeable visions, and paint with enchantment those dreamy hours which they owe to the effervescence of a gay imagination.—*Droz.*